



Exterminating Monkeys for Fashion's Freak

Revealing the Ruthless Slaughter of the Harmless "Horse-Tailed" Colluvus That Has Followed the Latest Craze for Dress Trimmings

The Picturesque Long-Haired Colluvus, or Horse-Tailed Monkey, Which Is Being Slaughtered by Thousands to Supply Monkey-Fur Trimming for Women's Gowns.

Photo by Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History.

Part of a Collection of 6,000 Skins of Horse-Tailed Monkeys, Ready To Be Dyed and Cut into Long Strips and Fringes.

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slaughter that British, French and Italian colonial officials are co-operating with the native authorities in many African territories to restrict the hunting immediately in order to save certain long-haired species of monkeys from complete extinction.

American Consul Cross, stationed at Aden, Arabia, has just reported to Washington that the restrictions are about to be rigidly enforced in Abyssinia, and that monkeys henceforth are to be rigorously protected—from the women.

What's it all about? Why should seventeen million monkeys die to please the whims of lovely woman?

It's as simple as A B C. The monkeys have a curious idea that they have a right to wear the fur with which nature clothed them. "But you can't," says fair Helen, "Your fur amuses me—for the moment—and I propose to wear it myself!"

Now there is this peculiar thing about monkey fur—that a woman can manage to live—though doubtless discontented and unhappy—without it; whereas the monkey can't live without it at all.

And as woman insists on having it, the monkey, unwillingly, yields up his life and his hide together.

Hence we have an extraordinary double phenomenon characteristic of modern civilization—Abyssinian and African forests cluttered with the bones of millions of monkeys who have lost their fur; Parisian boulevards, New York avenues and a thousand "Main Streets" thronged with fashionable women tricked out in the furs the monkeys have lost.

Why the sudden rage for monkey fur? Ten years ago nobody ever heard of wearing monkey fur. Now every fashionable woman is wearing it. Previously, woman had worn the fur of practically every other known fur-bearing animal, from skunks and alley-cats to royal Bengal tigers. But she had "laid off" monkeys—perhaps because they looked so nearly human. Maybe the war did it. Everybody got so used to the idea of killing real human beings by the millions that it seemed a small matter to slaughter a few million more creatures that merely looked human.

Inquiry among leading furriers and fashionable dressmakers concerning the reason for the monkey fur fad elicited some interesting replies.

"Monkey fur isn't really fur at all,"

pointed out one of the biggest Fifth Avenue furriers. "It is really monkey hair. One chief reason for its popularity is probably the fact that it is 'different.' Very little of it is used for cloaks or wraps, or even fur collars. It is used almost exclusively as a decorative trimming, in the same way you would use lace or beads or ribbon."

"Most of it is sold to the dressmakers and to the retail trade not by the pelt or by the garment, but by the yard, just like lace. It is a sort of hairy fringe, and it is used to decorate almost every article of feminine apparel from dancing frocks and street clothes to intimate boudoir wraps and even pajamas."

What kind of monkeys yield this fashionable fur, where and how they are killed, were questions on which the furriers and dressmakers were almost wholly in the dark.

Books failed to yield the information, for the industry is comparatively new and no books have been written about it. Even Dr. William T. Hornaday, director of the New York Zoological Park, one of the best wild animal authorities in the world, was unable to give complete data on the subject.

Finally, however, the following authentic information was secured through the American Museum of Natural History:

To begin with, the average monkey, the kind you usually see on top of a hand-organ or in a cage at the zoo, is—luckily for him—of no value as a sacrifice on the altar of feminine vanity. His hair is short, not of a particularly attractive color, and usually he is flea-bitten to boot.

It is only the long-haired monkey, seldom seen in captivity in this country, which is sought for its fur. This monkey, whose scientific name is Colluvus, is found chiefly in the mountainous regions of East Central Africa and in Abyssinia. He is of moderate size, neither large nor small, usually about two feet high. He is an arboreal ape—that is, he lives in trees as

distinguished from the gibbon or ground ape.

The Colluvus Guerreda, one of the most sought types, is covered with long, silky hair. The bottom of his body is whitish, the back or saddle is black. His face is black, surrounded by a white fringe. His tail is long and covered with long black hair, with a beautiful white tuft at the end. The legs are also black and fringed with white.

Occasionally these pelts are used in their natural black and white, but usually they are dyed black all over. Other types are naturally black, or black and brownish gray.

How are these monkeys caught or killed? A few are trapped in nets, some are caught in snares—nooses set with triggers in the trees, fastened to a branch which springs back and hangs the monkey, usually by the neck. But monkeys are highly intelligent and not easy to trap. The great majority of monkeys taken for their fur are shot by African natives with bows and poisoned arrows—the old primitive weapon they have used for thousands of years.

The natives go out in bands, which separate and go stalking through the mountain-side forests or jungles in search of a monkey tribe or group.

When one stalker locates a company of monkeys he sets up a peculiar bird cry, which notifies his companions without alarming the monkeys that human enemies are at hand. When the band is gathered together, near a tree or group of trees where the monkeys have taken refuge, they hide as carefully as possible in the brush surrounding the spot and begin to discharge their arrows.

Thus the slaughter begins. Monkey after monkey, transfixed or perhaps merely grazed by a poisoned arrow, topples out of the tree, shudders for a moment on the

The Fur of Eight Monkeys Was Required to Trim This Gown. Note the Monkey Fur at Hem of Skirt, at Knees, on Draped Scarf and at Shoulders.



ground and dies. For a little while the others are puzzled and amazed at what is happening. The arrows are coming from all sides at once, so they do not know in what direction to flee.

When the survivors do attempt to escape, by swinging themselves from tree to tree, the natives pursue on the ground, and only a few of the victims finally escape. The dead monkeys are gathered up, strung on long poles, carried to a camping place, where they are immediately skinned and the skins pegged out to dry.

The carcasses are thrown away. The poison from the arrows would make them dangerous to eat. The skins, after they have been partially dried, are carried back to a trading post, where they are sold to white traders, sometimes for money, but usually for copper wire, with which the natives make bracelets and ornaments, or for beads, utensils, knives and trinkets.

The wholesale value of a monkey skin,

after it has reached the trading post in Africa, is from forty-five to ninety cents. Prices when the products reach civilization in its finished form, usually of narrow monkey fur fringe, range from \$5 per yard up, depending on the length and silkiness of the hair.

How long the fad for monkey fur will last—whether women will want to continue wearing this trimming when they have learned of the wholesale slaughter it entails—whether the restrictions against the slaughter can be made effective—are questions which only the future will tell.

In the meantime, apparently at least from the numbers of furs which are still reaching this country, and from the increasing frequency with which the trimming is seen on all sorts of feminine apparel, the extermination of monkeys for fashion's latest freak is still going on despite the efforts of various governments to have it stopped.